

40,000 of California's 1 Million Refugees are Elderly (over 60)

Primary problems reported by senior refugees settling in CA are similar to those in other states.

- Loss of status in the family -
Family cultural values of venerating and respecting elders are challenged by this country's new value system that seems to place greater value on youth.
- Isolation -
Lack of English skills limits usage of mainstream systems like bus transportation, telephones, senior centers, and shopping. Limited language skills also keep elderly refugees home alone all day while family members work away from home or attend school.
- Depression -
Caused by isolation and lack of social interaction, loss of family status, and inability to adapt to a new way of life.
- Abuse –
Physical and financial abuse by family members and others who prey on the elderly refugees' limited language skills and education.

Providers of refugee services cite the following problems:

Need for congregate, culturally appropriate meals, transportation, translation/interpreter services, citizenship and health education classes, assistance in applying for services and with personal activities like shopping, and cleaning. Limited funding for refugee senior centers from which to provide these services and reluctance to participate in mainstream senior services.